

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1958

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:SREF CH VN
SUBJ: FURTHER CONTROVERSY OVER PRC REPATRIATION OF ETHNIC
CHINESE FROM SRV

REF: PEKING 1903

1. SUMMARY: THE PRC, IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES, HAS COM-
PLAINED ABOUT VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATING POSITIONS ON THE
QUESTION OF SHIPBORNE REPATRIATION OF ETHNIC CHINESE,
AS WELL AS ABOUT HANOI'S NEGOTIATING TACTICS. IT FINDS
UNACCEPTABLE THE PORTS DESIGNATED BY THE SRV, THE TIME
LIMIT IMPOSED, HANOI'S POSITION ON THE NATIONALITY
QUESTION AND ITS PRESCRIBED PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING
THOSE TO BE REPATRIATED. IN LANGUAGE CALCULATED TO STIR
UP POPULAR ANTIPATHY FOR VIETNAM, PEKING HAS ALSO ACCUSED
HANOI OF COLLUDING WITH TAIWAN AND HINTED THAT THE SRV
MAY TRY TO SLIP SPIES IN AMONG THE REFUGEES END SUMMARY.

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2. AFTER MAINTAINING OFFICIAL SILENCE FOR SEVEAL
DAYS AS TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF ITS TWO SHIPS, THE PRC
JUNE 24 CHARGED PUBLICLY THAT VIETNAM WAS IMPEDING
ITS EFFORTS TO REPATRIATE "PERSECUTED" ETHNIC
CHINESE FROM SAIGON AND HAIPHONG. IT RELKEASED
THROUGH NCNA THE TEXT OF A NOTE SENT THE SAME DAY TO

THE VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND PRINTED A COMPANION STORY QUOTING CHARGES MADE BY THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN A MEETING WITH SRV AUTHORITIES. NCNA THE FOLLOWING DAY PRINTED A COMMENTARY ELABORATING ON THESE CHARGES. ALL THREE STORIES WERE ALSO CARRIED PROMINENTLY IN PEOPLE'S DAILY.

3. THIS NEW CHINESE PROPAGANDA SALVO IS A REACTION TO HANOI'S NOTE OF JUNE 19 IN WHICH THE SRV LAID DOWN SIX CONDITIONS FOR SHIPBORNE REPATRIATION TO THE PRC. PEKING OBJECTS TO THESE CONDITIONS ON FOUR GROUNDS. FIRST, HANOI INSISTS ON CALLING THE ETHNIC CHINESE "HOA PEOPLE", IMPLYING THAT THEY ARE ALL VIETNAMESE CITIZENS -- WHICH CHINA FINDS BOTH INACCURATE AND ILLOGICAL. SECOND, THE PRC OBJECTS TO THE DESIGNATION OF VUNGTAU AS THE PICK-UP PORT FOR REFUGEES FROM THE SOUTH, SINCE IT IS TOO FAR FROM SAIGON; THE CHINESE ALSO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE USE OF CUA VE PORT IN THE NORTH. THIRD, THEY OBJECT TO THE TIME LIMIT OF THREE DAYS IN PORT IMPOSED BY HANOI. AND FINALLY, THEY REJECT THE SYSTEM OUTLINED IN HANOI'S NOTE WHEREBY REFUGEE LISTS WOULD BE PREPARED SOLELY BY SRV AUTHORITIES, INSISTING ON THE RIGHT TO PROCESS THE REFUGEES THEMSELVES.

4. THE NCNA COMMENTARY AVOIDS RECENT PRC SPECULATIONS AS TO SOVIET INSTIGATION OF VIETNAMESE BEHAVIOR BUT RAISES TWO NEW ISSUES CALCULATED TO STIR UP ANTI-VIETNAMESE FEELING AMONG CHINESE READERS. IN AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO RECENT REPATRIATION FLIGHTS TO TAIWAN, IT CHARGES THAT HANOI AUTHORITIES "HAVE COLLUDED, OVERTLY OR COVERTLY, WITH THE CHIANG KAI-SHANG IN TAIWAN ... AND STEALTHILY SENT CHINESE NATIONALS TO TAIWAN". IT ALSO HINTS DARKLY THAT ALLOWING VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES TO DECIDE WHO MAY BE REPATRIATED WILL PERMIT THEM TO SLIP IN "VIETNAMESE WITH SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS," I.E., SPIES, ABOARD THE SHIPS.

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5. THE JUNE 24 ARTICLE MAKES SEVERAL BITTER COMMENTS ON HANOI'S NEGOTIATING STYLE WHICH WILL BRING A WRY SMILE TO THE LIPS OF ANYONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PARIS TALKS OF EARLY 1970S. IT BLASTS THE VIETNAMESE FOR ACCUSING CHINA OF DELAYING TACTICS AFTER THE PRC EMBASSY HAD ALREADY ASKED FOR A MEETING; ACCUSES HANOI OF ADOPTING FIRM POSITIONS AND REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE; AND COMPLAINS THAT SINCE IT WAS VIETNAM WHICH PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS, "YOU SHOULD HAVE THE MINIMUM SINCERITY FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS AND SHOULD

NOT BE A HYPOCRITE". IT CONCLUDES THAT VIETNAM
MUST EITHER CHANGE ITS ATTITUDE OR ELSE "BEAR FULL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL CONSEQUENCES ARISING
THERFROM."

6. COMMENT: THE CHINESE APPEAR TO REALIZE THAT THE
VIETNAMESE HOLD THE TRUMP CARDS ON THIS PARTICULAR
ROUND, SINCE THE CHINESE SHIPS ARE UNLIKELY TO TRY
TO FORCE THEIRWAY INTO PORT. PEKING'S DECISION TO
GO PUBLIC WITH ITS FRUSTRATION OVER THE NEGOTIATIONS
IS NO DOUBT DESIGNED TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC OPINION, BOTH
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CHINA, IN SUPPORT OF ITS POSITION,
AND PERHAPS TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR ADDITIONAL
MEASURES AGAINST THE VIETNAMESE IF THEY DO NOT YIELD
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GROUND.

7. THE ARTICLES, HOWEVER, ALSO REVEAL THE EMOTIONAL
CONTENT OF CHINA'S ACTIONS TOWARD HANOI. AS ONE
FURTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO BANGKOK
(AND NEWLY APPOINTED PRCLO CHIEF) CHAI TSE-MIN RE-
CENTLY RECOUNTED IN SOME INDIGNATION TO THAI EMBOFF
HERE HOW VIETNAMESE MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAD REFUSED
TO LET THE CHINESE NEAR THE WRECKS OF AMERICAN PLANES
DURING THE WAR, EVEN THOUGH THESE PLANES HAD BEEN SHOT
DOWN BY CHINESE ANTI-AIRCRAFT CREWS. WE SUSPECT
THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF TENSION IN THE HISTORY OF
THESE TWO COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS, AND THAT A FURTHER
DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WILL BOTH BE BASED ON AND
WILL BRING TO LIGHT OTHER SUCH BONES OF CONTENTION.
WOODCOCK

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